

2003 Winner - Mr David Sugden AO



Dr Peter Hopwood, MCB Chairman (right), presents David Sugden with the AGM Michell Award

On 28 March in Melbourne, the Mechanical College presented David Sugden with the 2003 AGM Michell Award for his outstanding contribution to Australian Mechanical Engineering.

David Sugden has been the driving force behind the successful design of mechanical full-face rock excavation machinery over a number of years, resulting in the forging of countless tunnels all across the world. David has continually shown a commitment to innovation and design throughout his career, often custom making machinery to solve problems that arose and for which no existing devices were available or appropriate. As a result of this attitude, David is listed as the inventor on over 40 patents.

Beginning his career in 1938 as a Cadet Engineer with the Public Works Dept of WA he continued with a number of appointments at the Hydro-Electric Commission of Tasmania. Whilst at the HEC, David was instrumental in introducing the Commission and subsequently Australia to Machine tunnelling. In 1967, David began a long and internationally recognised consultancy career that continues to this day. Notably he has had significant involvement with both the Robbins Company of Seattle, USA and Terratec Asia Pacific.

David has been actively involved in an honorary capacity on various community organisation boards, CSIRO committees, various educational and professional committees and the Industrial Design Council of Australia.

Not restricted to designing tunnelling equipment, David has designed a new Violin, which is cheaper to produce but still maintains a quality sound, opening up the learning of the violin to a greater number of people and which has been favourably received by the conservative music world.

David has been recognised for his contribution to tunnelling and the mentoring of young engineers involved in the field, with an Order of Australia in 2002 and with the Alan Neyland Memorial Award, awarded by the Australian Underground Construction & Tunnelling Association. AUCTA has also recently named its young engineers writing competition after David.

David Sugden continues to be involved in all areas of engineering from consulting, practice and design, to education and mentoring of young engineers.